DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 062 456 UD 012 273

AUTHOR Passow, A. Harry
TITLE Social Deprivation and Change in Education: American Action and Reaction.
PUB DATE [Apr 72]
NOTE 25p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Compensatory Education Programs; Cultural Disadvantagement; Economic Disadvantagement; *Educational Change; Educational Disadvantagement; Educational Opportunities; *Educational Policy; Educational Theories; *Federal Legislation; Intervention; Policy Formation; *Program Development; School Integration; *Social Disadvantagement; Student Teacher Relationship

ABSTRACT

It is not easy to describe American efforts during the past dozen or so years aimed at improving the quality of education for all, with particular attention to those termed "the disadvantaged." The difficulties stem from the diversity of activities and programs, the ebb and flow of various efforts, the responses and resistances to legislative and judicial actions, the thrust of research and development programs, and the intricate interrelationships of political and societal forces affecting education. Several approaches might be taken in describing and analyzing the American experience. One might focus on the major pieces of legislation enacted since the Kennedy era. Another focus might be on a number of reports and studies produced in recent years which studied conditions and recommended policies affecting educational programs and school organization. A third focus might be on the hypotheses or theoretical bases or explanations--implicit or explicit--which have been advanced to account for the problems of the disadvantaged and which underlie various strategies for intervention in the home, school, and community. Yet another focus might be on the patterns of programs and projects aimed at improving educational opportunities and performance of the disadvantaged. (Author/JM)

ED062456

Social Deprivation and Change in Education: American Action and Reaction

A. HARRY PASSOW
Jacob H. Schiff Professor of Education
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, New York 10027 U.S.A.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

It is not easy to describe American efforts during the past dozen or so years aimed at improving the quality of education for all, with particular attention to those we call "the disadvantaged." The difficulties stem from the diversity of activities and programs, the ebb and flow of various efforts, the responses and resistances to legislative and judicial actions, the thrust of research and development programs, the intricate interrelationships of societal forces affecting education, and a somewhat belated recognition that education is basically a political animal.

Major Federal Legislation

Several approaches might be taken in describing and analyzing the American experience. For example, one might focus on the major pieces of legislation enacted since the Kennedy era when the "war on poverty" was launched and the civil rights movement gathered impetus. Since the early 1960's, a number of important federal acts contained provisions for direct or indirect aid to those who are economically impoverished or discriminated against because of race or ethnic origins. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 was designed to strengthen and extend all aspects of focational and technical education but gave particular attention to specific disadvantaged groups. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 included subsidies for schools planning and implementing desegregation, making provisions for training personnel and developing curriuclum. The Economic

UD012273

Opportunity Act of 1964 provided for a Job Corps, work-study programs, urban and rural community action programs, adult basic education, remedial programs, preschool and day care centers, and teacher training. The 1965 revision of the National Defense Education Act shifted the emphasis of the original act to provide for greater attention to training teachers to work with the educationally disadvantaged, extend guidance and counseling services, and use new media more effectively. The Higher Education Act of 1965 included provisions for teacher education for classroom and supervisory personnel in schools with disadvantaged pupils as well as financial assistance for poor students attending colleges and universities.

By far, the most significant piece of legislation was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. In the preamble to the first section, Title I, the Congress declared it to be "the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance...to local education agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low income families...." Title I, ESEA, has provided more than one billion dollars annually for support of programs for the educationally disadvantaged. Other sections of ESEA applied to programs designed "to contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of the educationally deprived children" although these special needs are never delineated. With each piece of federal legislation, guidelines are developed and published in the Federal Register wherein a framework is provided for schools and school systems to secure funding for programs which meet statutory requirements.

Major Reports and Studies

Another focus might be on a number of reports and studies produced in

recent years which studied conditions and recommended policies affecting educational programs and school organization. For example, the so-called Coleman Report (Equality of Educational Opportunity) provided educators, politicians, social scientists, and the general public with considerable grist for each of their mills and the findings are still being interpreted, reanalyzed, and debated six years after it was issued in 1966. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 required the U.S. Commissioner of Education to conduct a survey and report to the President of the United States on the "lack of availability of equal educational opportunities by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin...." The massive report (737 pages plus a 548-page supplemental appendix) provided a bleak picture of widespread segregation of both students and teachers, of scholastic achievement of black students substantially below that of white students, and of achievement disparities becoming progressively greater with each year of schooling. The differences anticipated in characteristics of majority-black and majority-white schools (such as per-pupil expenditures, physical facilities, training of teachers in terms of years, etc.) did not materialize and were not nearly as large as had been expected. In fact, regional differences were much larger than those between majority-black and majority-white schools within a region.

A conclusion reached in the report has proved to be especially controversial:

> Taking all these results together, one implication stands above all: That schools bring little influence to bear upon a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context; and that this very lack of independent effect means that the inequalities imposed upon children by their home, neighborhood, and peer environment are carried along to become the inequalities with which they confront adult life at the end of school. For equality of educational opportunity through schools must imply a strong effect of schools that is independent of the child's social environment, and

> that strong independent effect is not present in American schools. /emphasis added/ (1)

The study did indicate differences among ethnic groups in their apparent sensitivity to the effect of some school factors, such as the quality of teachers and the availability of enriched programs. One pupil attitude factor appeared to have a particularly strong relationship to achievement--this was the extent to which the individual pupil felt he had some control over his own destiny and could affect his own environment and future. This environmental-control factor seemed to be related to the racial balance in the school: the blacks in schools with a higher proportion of whites had a great sense of control.

Building on the Coleman data but studying 14 large-city school systems in terms of their compensatory educational programs, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights issued a report titled Racial Isolation in the Public Schools which examined the consequences of segregation on educational attainment. The Commission rejected "years of school completed" as a valid measure of educational attainment because of an ever-widening gap between black and white students as they progress through school:

> By the time the twelfth grade is reached, the average white student performs at or slightly below the twelfth grade level, but the average Negro student performs below the ninth grade level. Thus, years of school completed has an entirely different meaning for Negroes than whites. /emphasis added/ (2)

Significantly, the Commission pointed to differences in educational achievement being accompanied by increasing social and economic gaps between blacks and whites with the significant gains for blacks in the past two decades not drastically altering the disparities. As the Commission observed: "the closer the promise of equality seems to come, the further it slips away." The Commission urged racial and socioeconomic desegregation of schools,

observing that: "Regardless of his own family background, an individual student achieves better in schools where most of his fellows are from advantaged backgrounds than in schools where most of his fellow students are from disadvantaged backgrounds."

The U. S. Office of Education and individual researchers have continued to analyze the Coleman data. Guthrie sharpened the dilemma policy makers face when he pointed out that since the Coleman Report was issued,

> the belief has become increasingly pervasive that patterns of academic performance are immutably molded by social and economic conditions outside the school. If incorrect, and if allowed to persist unexamined and unchallenged, this belief could have wildly disabling consequences. It is not at all difficult to foresee how it could become self-fulfilling; administrators and teachers believing that their school and schoolroom actions make no difference might begin to behave accordingly. Conversely, if the assertion is correct but allowed to pass unheeded, the prospect of pouring even more billions of local, State, and Federal dollars down an ineffective rathole labeled "schools" is equally unsettling. (3)

Under the direction of George Mayeske of the U. S. Office of Education, major reanalyses of Coleman data have resulted in some tempering of the conclusions of the original report. For example, the influence of the school on achievement cannot be separated from that of the student's social background and vice versa, one report points out: "In conclusion, it may be stated that schools are indeed important. It is equally clear, however, that their influence is bound up with that of the student's social background."(4) On the other hand, a series of reexaminations of the data reported in a book edited by Mosteller and Moynihan confirms most of the findings of the Coleman Report.(5) One sub-study suggests that neither upgrading the school nor integration will close the achievement gap between blacks and whites unless the socioeconomic gap is also closed.

Seeking the causes of civil disorders and riots which had occurred in 1968, the Kerner Commission (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders) pointed to the interactions of economic, political, educational, legal, health and welfare factors contributing to the urban crisis. The Commission commented on the "bleak record of public education for ghetto children" and charged that rather than helping to overcome the effects of discrimination and deprivation, such schools were a source of resentment and grievance in black communities. The Commission recommended that four "basic strategies" be pursued to reverse the existing trends and to move toward providing full equality of educational opportunity: (a) increase efforts to eliminate de facto segregation, (b) improve the quality of teaching in ghetto schools, (c) improve school-community relations, and (d) expand opportunities for higher and vocational education.(6)

The Riles Commission (President's Task Force on Urban Education) issued a report in 1970 which provided a comprehensive analysis of the state of urban education which was, "by and large,... far from pleasant." As the report noted:

> Urban education systems are facing a major challenge to provide appropriate learning experiences for the various life styles of their vast numbers of students. The indicators of this challenge are extremely diverse in their intensity and scope: student unrest on university campuses and in the high schools, local community groups seeking control of their neighborhood schools, clashes with law enforcement agencies, complaints filed with regard to use of Federal funds, teacher strikes, voter rejection of large city school bond issues, the proliferation of alternative plans for educating students, lack of priority for education in State and local governments.(7)

This challenge, the Riles Report observed, was part of another complex one--the perceptions of large numbers of members of racial and ethnic minority groups "that they have been short-changed by their fellow American citizens--

the white majority--who largely control the social, economic, political, and educational institutions of our nation."(8) The evidence, the Task Force concluded, largely supports these perceptions.

The Urban Education Task Force called for education--"broadly conceived and with new constituencies involved"--to be given high priority both in short and long-term planning. The report called for:

a. Significantly increased levels of funding from the federal government.

b. Expansion of the concept of the educative process to deal with the whole individual--"his health, his emotional well-being, his intellectual capacities, his future employment, his self-realization..."

c. Development and implementation of master plans for education which deal with causes and symptoms "within a framework of over-all urban problem solving rather than education per se..."

d. Deliberate sequencing of plans leading to institutional changes within the system itself.

e. Active participation by community residents and students in the decision-making process, including priorities for using funds, designing curriculum and program components, hiring and dismissing personnel.

f. Setting specific performance standards which can serve for personnel and school accountability.

g. Continuous assessment of all aspects of the educational program enabling immediate adjustments and modifications.

h. Racial and ethnic integration.(9)

Finally, the President's Commission on School Finance called for the states to take over the major burden of supporting the public schools. The Commission's recommendations were made hard on the heels of a number of federal and state court decisions which struck down the local property tax as the prime means of supporting schools. The courts ruled that such a tax denied individuals equal protection under the law--the quality of education being determined by the wealth of the district, rather than the equal allocation of resources. It has been argued that "there is no simple identity between dollars allocated among school districts and the equality of resources delivered to their students" but it is clear that compensatory and innovative efforts require more funding than has been available.

Major "Theories" or Explanation of Disadvantage

A third focus might be on the hypotheses or theoretical bases or explanations--implicit or explicit--which have been advanced to account for the problems of the disadvantaged and which underly various strategies for intervention in the home, school, and community. In the early 1960's, the controversy centered on "social deprivation versus educational deprivation." Those who sided with the social or environmental deprivation explanation argued that early experiential limitations, child-rearing practices that result in limited language and intellectual development as well as socializing experiences different from those of the middle-class, exposure to discriminatory practices which lower self-concepts, account for the disadvantaged child's poor scholastic performance. Those who sided with the educational deprivation explanation argued that it was the prejudice and racism of school staffs, irrelevant curriculum and inappropriate instructional resources, and insulation of school

from community which accounted for the difficulties of pupils. These two oversimplified explanations are still used and continue to guide development and implementation of various programs. Other explanations have been added.

In a highly controversial article which seemed to revive the presumably dormant heredity-versus-environment debate, Jensen suggested that genetic racial differences might account for developmental differentials and that these should be reflected in teaching practices and instructional programs.(10) Elsewhere, Jensen has written:

> Data that would permit firm conclusions about the genetic basis of differences among ethnic groups in measured intelligence do not yet exist. The question, however, is worthy of rigorous scientific research. It is unfortunate that so much of the past Negro-white differences, for example, has done so little to delineate either the genetic or environmental sources of these differences....To fail to recognize the biological basis of human differences in psychological characteristics is to limit understanding to only half the reality.(11)

The debate which the Jensen article provoked quickly resulted in coining of the term Jensenism which was a synonym for racism, and did little to promote much that could be called "rigorous scientific research." An article published by the same journal earlier consisted of a report on a study by Stodolsky and Lesser which demonstrated that particular patterns of cognitive abilities seem to be more or less highly developed in particular ethnic and racial groups, regardless of social class. Stodolsky and Lesser suggest that instructional programs should take into account these different patterns of strengths and weaknesses among ethnic groups.(12)

Teacher biases and a "self-fulfilling prophecy" phenomenon have been advanced to explain the poor scholastic performance of disadvantaged children. Publication of the Rosenthal and Jacobson study, Pygmalion in the Classroom, provided some support to relationship between teacher expectation and pupil

performance.(13) Clark summed up this position some time ago as follows:

> The evidence so far very strongly suggests that these children will learn if they are taught and they will not learn if they are approached as if they cannot learn....if children, poor children or Negro children or immigrant children are taught, accepted, respected and approached as if they are human beings, the average performance of these children may approach, and eventually reach the norm performance of other human beings who are so taught.(14)

This charge of poor performance as a function of low teacher expectation has manifested itself in the more serious accusation by some racial and ethnic minority groups that schools in ghetto areas are practicing what they describe as "educational genocide." Such groups are demanding, as part of a move toward community control, that they be permitted to hire and fire teachers in order to create a staff which will perform in ways consistent with "community needs and goals."

Another explanation for poor performance by disadvantaged pupils is found in school organization, both intra-school and inter-school. The argument is made that grouping, streaming, and tracking are means for making respectable the procedures whereby pupils from lower-classes, racial and ethnic minority groups are assigned to programs which provide them with a qualitatively inferior educational experience. Within so-called comprehensive schools, different curricula or programs or "tracks" are found. Racial and ethnic minority group students and those from lower socio-economic classes are found in disproportionate numbers in the non-academic, non-collegiate, terminal courses. Thus, rather than facilitating social mobility, schools are accused of exercising a sorting-out process which discriminates against the disadvantaged. The fact that so relatively few disadvantaged youth go on to post-secondary education is blamed, in part, on the gate-keeping operation of secondary school staffs.

Still another explanation of poor scholastic performance of disadvantaged

children is advanced in terms of the discrepancies in motivation and values between the home and the school. Bronfenbrenner, for example, asserts:

> It is now recognized that the problem of the disadvantaged child cannot be viewed solely in terms of impaired intellectual functioning. Such a child has been deprived not only of cognitive socialization but of socialization across the board. Thus he has been prevented from developing not only the intellectual skills but also the motivational characteristics and patterns of behavior that permit successful and satisfying participation in the large society.(15)

Baratz and Baratz, on the other hand, assert "that the behavior of Negroes is not pathological but can be explained within a coherent, distinct, American-Negro culture which represents a synthesis of African culture in contact with American European culture from the time of slavery to the present day."(16) Thus, cultural and value differences result in the view that many of the demands of the school are perceived as irrelevant and meaningless. Differences in what is valued by the Puerto Rican, Chicano (Mexican-American), American Indian, Appalachian White, and other sub-cultures from those of the dominant white middle-class majority often result in value conflicts which may result in the disadvantaged child perceiving his own culture as inferior. Those who support this view argue for the school changing its processes and materials to cultivate cultural pluralism. Some minority groups urge schools to undertake responsibility for "building nationhood"--pride in self, in race and ethnic group--as a high priority, even the highest.

Yet another explanation of scholastic performance of disadvantaged children is found in racially and/or socioeconomically segregated schools. The 1954 Supreme Court decision declared that separated facilities were inherently unequal and the de jure segregation was unconstitutional. The Coleman Report indicates that black students achieve better in integrated schools than in segregated ones and that students from low-income families do better in schools

which are predominantly middle-income than they do in schools which are mainly low-income. Fischer has written of the "unfortunate psychological effect upon a child of membership in a school where every pupil knows that, regardless of his personal attainments, the group with which he is identified is viewed as less able, less successful, and less acceptable than the majority of the community."(17)

The U. S. Commission on Civil Rights sees the environment of segregated schools as offering serious obstacles to learning:

> The schools are stigmatized as inferior in the community. The students often doubt their own worth, and their teachers frequently corroborate these doubts. The academic performance of their classmates is usually characterized by continuing difficulty. The children often have doubts about their chances of succeeding in a predominantly white society and they typically are in school with other students who have similar doubts. They are in schools which, by virtue both of their racial and social class composition, are isolated from models of success in school.(18)

It has been argued that quality education is not possible in a racially isolated school--whether segregated white or black--for, in addition to cognitive and academic skills, there are affective behaviors and attitudes whose growth is influenced by the environment of the school. As Pinderhughes has observed, pupils learn as much from one another as they do from their teachers. This, he calls, the hidden curriculum: "It involves such things as how to think about themselves, how to think about other people, and how to get along with them. It involves such things as values, codes, and styles of behavior...."(19) What constitutes a racially isolated school has been pretty well established; what constitutes a racially balanced school is not quite as clear. There is agreement on what is involved in desegregation and procedures for attaining it; it is now recognized that desegregation is only a first step toward integration.

The poor academic performance of disadvantaged pupils has been explained by the uneven distribution of available resources. The severe disparities in fiscal resources available to cities as compared to suburban school systems is paralleled by the discrepancies found within large-city school systems. Slum and ghetto area schools tend to be the oldest, most dilapidated, and most inadequate with respect to educational emenities. Classes are often overcrowded. Instructional materials are meager, of poor quality, and inappropriate for the population served. There is some question as to whether equal quality education would result from equal per-pupil expenditures--because of the special educational needs of disadvantaged pupils, more than equal expenditures are needed. Title I, ESEA aimed at additional expenditures for low-income pupils but the amounts were relatively small in terms of the total expenditures so that the issue of whether increased expenditures will improve scholastic performance has not been resolved.

Finally, it has been argued that disadvantage results from the lack of power of minority groups over the institutions and agencies which affect them. Lacking power, community groups have been unable to establish accountability on the part of school personnel with respect to their performance. This sense of powerlessness or lack of sense of control is transmitted to students in schools and affects their self-image. Only by acquiring control, it is maintained, can parents and other members of the community help shape curriculum, select instructional materials, and insist on high standards of teacher performance.

Thus, there are a variety of "theories" or explanations advanced to explain the inferior scholastic attainment of disadvantaged pupils and one or more of them can be used to provide a rationale for the various inter-

vention programs or treatments. Miller and Roby, for example, propose that strategies for improving educational performance of poor and minority group children can be subsumed in five categories: (a) changing the student and his family--aiming at "compensatory socialization" dealing with the environmental deficiencies in low-income family life; (b) changing the school--aiming at bringing about changes in the staff, curriculum, materials, organization, and services, rather than focusing on the learner and his family; (c) increasing resources and changing their distribution--raising the level of educational expenditure, making distribution more equitable, and providing a necessary differential for the disadvantaged; (d) changing the student composition--providing for greater socioeconomic and racial balance; and (e) changing the control of the schools--providing for greater community involvement in decision-making and control of school programs and processes.(20)

Patterns of Programs and Projects for the Disadvantaged

Yet another focus might be on the patterns of programs and projects aimed at improving educational opportunities and performance of the disadvantaged. Programs can be characterized in a variety of ways--depending on target population, nature of intervention, or intent. Some programs are innovative in the sense of attempting to reform some aspect of the educational system or create new conditions for delivery of educational services or suggest new goals. A good many programs, however, represent the pouring of "old wine in new bottles." It is possible to fit a good many of the thousands of current programs and projects into one or more of the following patterns:

a. Infant education and intervention in family life--various efforts aimed at changing child-rearing relationships between parent (usually the mother) and the infant, often involving the mother as a direct teacher.

b. Early childhood education--preschool programs ranging from traditional nursery and kindergarten practices through highly structured, academic oriented programs designed to develop specific skills for learning; largest number of such programs under the Head Start canopy.

c. Reading, language, and basic skills development--new curricula, methodologies, materials, personnel deployment, and "systems" designed to improve the reading and basic skills performance of disadvantaged children.

d. Bilingual education--programs designed for pupils whose mother tongue is other than English or whose dialect and speech are so divergent as to be considered "non-standard"; instruction in the mother tongue and teaching of English as a second language.

e. Curriculum relevance--modifications of existing courses and introduction of new courses which have a more direct relationship "to the world the student knows outside school or to the roles he plays now or will later play in his adult life" (Fantini and Young, 1970, p. 50); addition of programs dealing with racial and ethnic minority group experiences and heritage; introduction of courses dealing with significant current social, political, economic and personal problems.

f. Compensatory and remedial programs--programs aimed at presumed or real deficiencies in disadvantaged learners; remedial activities designed to overcome poor performance in basic areas; cultural enrichment programs aimed at broadening horizons of inner-city pupils.

g. Guidance and counselling--guidance, psychological, and therapeutic services adapted to the needs of disadvantaged pupils and their parents; addition of social workers and community agents to bridge gap between school and family.

h. Tutoring programs--individual and small group tutoring by professionals, paraprofessionals, and volunteers, adults and youth, based in school or non-school agency or institution.

i. Testing, measurement and evaluation--efforts made to develop more effective diagnostic and evaluative procedures which serve instructional rather than selective functions; reappraisal of grouping and tracking procedures; development of more appropriate grading procedures; sensitization of staff members to the consequences of expectations from grading and testing procedures.

j. School organization--extended school days, extended school years, year-round schools, team teaching, ungraded programs, open classrooms, modular scheduling, flexible grouping to replace rigid tracking systems.

k. Instructional materials and resources--production of new multi-media instructional resources aimed at central city students; increase in the availability of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-social class, multi-level, urban oriented materials; development of resources dealing with the racial and ethnic experience in America.

l. Vocational education, dropout prevention and return programs--compensatory and remedial programs, additional counselling and guidance, addition of social and community workers, vocational preparation in and out of school, work experience, work-study programs, and revised vocational-technical programs specifically designed for the 16-21 year old group.

m. Urban school staffing--programs aimed at recruitment, training, induction, retention, and continuing education of all professional personnel at pre and in-service levels; development of new relationships and programs between colleges and school systems, between industries and schools; attention to attitudes and expectations; new staffing patterns; addition of various kinds of "specialists" in schools.

n. Auxilliary school personnel--programs aimed at recruiting, training, and involving paraprofessionals, volunteers, and aides in a variety of educational and supportive services; building of new careers and career ladders in the realm of public service; involvement of parents and volunteers in teaching programs.

o. Post-secondary and higher education--high school programs aimed at motivating and preparing disadvantaged youth for college; development of new selection and admission procedures; provision of services to smooth transition from school to college and increase success chances; modification of college curriculum to increase relevance for minority groups; expanding opportunities for higher education through new institutions.

p. Community school and community development--development of schools as educational, neighborhood, community services, and community development centers; programs involving joint school and community agencies in attacking urban problems.

q. Desegregation and integration--programs designed to correct racial and ethnic imbalance, de jure and de facto and to provide for a more integrated, plurastic school society; counter-drive for separatism and for local control of schools, sometimes as end and sometimes as an interim step toward pluralism.

r. Decentralization and community control--programs designed to bring decision-making closer to the community and redistribute power and control; efforts to establish accountability for effectiveness of teaching and schools.

s. Alternative schools and school systems--proposals for establishing competitive systems, private and public; provisions for "education by voucher"; establishment of alternative schools within public and non-public sectors; initiation of performance contracts with non-public school companies and agencies.

t. Federally supported or assisted programs--programs authorized by federal legislation, such as Elementary and Secondary Education Act (particularly Titles I and III) and programs such as Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Upward Bound, National Teacher Corps, Head Start, Manpower Development and Training Programs; various programs of categorical aid and assistance with desegregation.

u. Allocation of educational resources--efforts through court litigation and pressures for new legislation to correct intra-state and intra-district inequalities in allocation of educational resources; substantial additional funding for some ghetto schools (e.g., More Effective Schools program). (21)

Dilemmas and Constraints

A dozen years of effort designed to provide equality of educational opportunity for all in the United States have not produced the hope-for results. Pessimistically, one might view the situation as follows:

> having spent billions of dollars on compensatory education, initiated thousands of projects (each with its own clever acronym title), completed thousands of studies of uneven significance and even more disparate quality, entered numerous judicial decisions and rulings, experienced dozens of riots and disorders, and generated whole new agencies and educational institutions, the nation's urban schools continue to operate in a vortex of segregation, alienation, and declining achievement.(22)

Evaluations of large-scale, national projects have not generally produced positive results. A study conducted for the National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children found some 21 programs--screened from 1,000 of the more than 20,000 Title I ESEA projects--which had produced "significant achievement gains in language and numerical skills."(23) The Westinghouse-Ohio University National Evaluation of Head Start programs reported rather minimal or no improvements with Head Start children still below normal on achievement and psycholinguistic tests but approaching norms on readiness tests.(24) A report by the Office of Economic Opportunity indicated that the widely heralded Performance Contracting Program had not produced significant gains for the disadvantaged: "Both control and experimental students did equally poorly in terms of achievement gains, and this result was remarkably consistent across sites and among children with different degrees of initial capability."(25)

In almost every instance when such evaluative or research reports are released, they are immediately attacked on the basis of the research design, the adequacy of sampling, the instrumentation, the length of time of the treatment, or the timing of the report--as related to some political event or pending Congressional or Presidential action. Programs have been initiated, have seemed to be working, have spread to large numbers of school systems, and then dropped. The widely-publicized Higher Horizons Program is a good example of this situation. Higher Horizons became a prototype for programs for the disadvantaged in cities across the country. An evaluation of the "model" New York City project found that the results did not indicate a significant difference-- for a variety of understandable reasons-- and the program was phased out of the schools at the same time it was being started in other cities.

Why, then, has there not been more progress in upgrading the educational opportunities for the disadvantaged? One might speculate that all or some of the following reasons might explain why.

a. Most programs consist of isolated piecemeal projects, intended to increase the schools' effectiveness in attaining traditional objectives--at a minimum, the attainment of basic literacy. Few programs are comprehensive, aimed at fundamental educational reforms, or designed to use educational resources in substantively different ways. As the National Advisory Council on Education of the Disadvantaged observed:

> It has long been clear that the mere addition of people, equipment, and special services does not by itself constitute compensatory education; success in making up for the educational deprivation which stems from poverty requires a strategy for blending these resources in an integrated program that strikes at both roots and consequences of disadvantage. The details of this strategy, however, have by no means been clear.(26)

The strategy of "Try Harder" which has been adopted by many projects has simply not been good enough.

b. There is little evidence that program planners are designing projects using a research base. There is a rich and mushrooming body of literature on cognitive and affective developmental differences among various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups; on family structure, life styles, and child-rearing patterns as these affect learning; on schooling as socialization; on language development and linguistic differences. Guidelines issued for development of proposals for federal and state funding are just beginning to direct planners to indicate the rationale for the design and the diagnostic basis for the proposal. Too many projects represent a reinvention of the wheel--but a square one at that.

c. Programs for the disadvantaged tend to follow the dollar. The major source of funding for the disadvantaged is federal and state legislation. Policies guiding the development and enactment of legislation are, of course, based on politics and political maneuvers, subject to the compromises needed for enactment as much or more than educational considerations.(27) Legislation must satisfy and serve a variety of constituent communities. Despite the broadening of the base in recent years, political power still resides in the white-majority, middle class and legislation benefiting the disadvantaged has difficulty not being compromised to death.

d. Political considerations can result in a complete shift of policy and funding support. This point is clearly illustrated with the current controversy over what is called "forced busing." In effect, 18 years of progress toward desegregation is in jeopardy by President Nixon's politically expedient proposal for a moratorium on all new busing orders by federal

courts until July 1973. As the President said, "This is a deeply emotional divisive issue," which he has made even more emotional and divisive for clearly partisan political purposes. The President proposed in his Equal Educational Opportunities Act that money for disadvantaged children be increased and targeted to reach a critical mass of $300-400 per child. Thus, school desegregation is being halted (where busing is involved) in favor of compensatory education, with no new money actually being proposed. As The New York Times put it: "It is a drive that pushes the political bandwagons of both parties off the road toward an integrated society. The 'separate but equal' doctrine has been revived under the polite cover of upgrading segregated schools."(28) Aside from the constitutional crisis which will result from the President and the Congress attempting to curb the courts, this political act could lead to desegregation retrenchment throughout the country. Further, educational policies are being formulated by the courts in areas affecting the disadvantaged--e.g., desegregation and allocation of resources--which educators are called upon to implement.

e. Minority groups have taken seriously the notion of building a power base and cultural identification as the means of achieving equality. Blacks, Chicanoes, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians have moved toward separatism, local control, and a recognized identity which appears to be counter to moves for integration and cultural pluralism. Generally, schools have not known how to respond to these demands without becoming defensive or evasive. Token adjustments in curriculum, program and staffing have satisfied neither minorities nor the majority. The Urban Education Task Force suggests that these thrusts are not antithetical to the aims of integration but rather:

> This emergent--and newest--thrust seems to hold potentially the greatest promise to achieving genuine integration since it concomitantly recognizes

> common goals (e.g., economic self-sufficiency, a healthful environment, improved educational programs) and proposes to work cooperatively on the ways to achieve them.(29)

f. Poverty, racism, and discrimination have very deep roots in American society and educational problems are entwined with other problems of that society. The so-called "forced busing" issue, for instance, is a phony one: when busing of black children to segregated schools was the mode, busing was not forced; only when both white and black children were to be bused to desegregate schools did it become an issue. De Facto segregation is a consequence of housing patterns; an integrated society would have integrated housing and, consequently, integrated schools. An attack on "the roots and consequences of disadvantage" would involve a coordination of efforts in education, housing, employment, health, welfare, and security rather than the current approaches which are often counter-productive. It has been argued by some minority groups that white American society is really not concerned with righting the wrongs of the past or with providing for full and equal opportunities in all aspects of that society, but only with maintaining itself. The charge of "institutional racism" is one that cannot de dismissed simply as militant rhetoric but needs to be confronted and dealt with as it applies to the school.

g. "Equality of educational opportunity" and "quality education" are well-worn phrases in American education. The present crisis has forced educators and the public to begin to probe more deeply into the meanings of these expressions. Equality or inequality involve numerous school and community inputs, processes, and outcomes. The various theories or explanations of disadvantage are, in reality, only partial or complementary. In trying to explain failures in educating the disadvantaged, we have too often sought to place blame or have fixed on single "causes" rather than attempt to understand how many factors

interact in the educational processes to affect the outcomes. Thus, more money, better-trained personnel, elimination of slums, desegregation, and three dozen other "solutions" are proposed, each as a panacea. When programs seem to work, we have not examined them adequately to understand what elements are contributing to such functioning.

The focus on education of the disadvantaged has caused thoughtful educators to begin to rethink the whole educational process--the goals, the means, the personnel and material resources, the environment, the strategies, and the relationships. Clearly, education is not limited to the school and the classroom. The home, the school, and the community each provides educative functions which relate, interact, and reinforce or constrict one another. Reform in education--triggered by the failure of the schools to provide adequately for the disadvantaged and thus fail to provide for meaningful educational opportunities--will not come easily. Schools, like other societal institutions, have their vested interests, with constant struggles for power and prerogatives.

There are those who argue that society must cure itself of all the problems and pathologies which exist in depressed areas before the schools will be able to provide adequately for the disadvantaged minority group children. There are others who argue that the school is the one agency that exists in all neighborhoods which could serve as a catalytic agent to mobilize other forces against poverty, segregation, and alienation. The past dozen years have forced educators to reexamine the meaning of equality of educational opportunity and the means by which that goal is to be attained. In doing so, there is little doubt that all children and youth have profited from this soul searching. It has been and is still a trying time but one from which all may yet profit. In

trying to understand the meaning of disadvantage, we have probed more deeply into how we should be educating all children, youth, and adults. This is why one can continue to have some optimism.

References

1. Coleman, J. S. et al. Equality of Educational Opportunity. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1966. p.325.
2. U. S. Commission on Civil Rights. Racial Isolation in the Public Schools. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1967. p.14.
3. Guthrie, J. W. "A Survey of School Effectiveness Studies," in Do Teachers Make a Difference? Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970. p. 25.
4. Mayeske, G. et al. A Study of Our Nation's Schools. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1970. p.xiv.
5. Mosteller, F. and Moynihan, D. P. On Equality of Educational Opportunity. New York: Random House, 1972.
6. National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. New York: Bantam Books, 1968. pp.438-455.
7. President's Task Force on Urban Education. Urban School Crisis: The Problem and Solutions. Washington, D. C.: National School Public Relations Association, 1970. p.5.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., pp.6-7.
10. Jensen, A. R. "How Much Can We Boost I.Q. and Scholastic Achievement?" Harvard Educational Review, 39 (Winter 1969), 1-123.

11. Jensen, A. R. "Biogenetic Perspectives: Introduction" in Social Class, Race, and Psychological Development, edited by M. Deutsch, I. Katz, and A. R. Jensen. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968. pp.9-10.

12. Stodolsky, S. S. and Lesser, G. "Learning Patterns in the Disadvantaged," Harvard Educational Review, 38 (1967), 546-593.

13. Rosenthal, R. L. and Jacobson, L. Pygmalion in the Classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968.

14. Clark, K. B. "The Cult of Cultural Deprivation: A Complex Social Psychological Phenomenon," in Environmental Deprivation and Enrichment. New York: Ferkhauf Graduate School of Education, Yeshiva University, 1965. pp.41-42.

15. Bronfenbrenner, U., "Motivational and Social Components in Compensatory Education Programs," in Critical Issues in Research Related to Disadvantaged Children, edited by E. Grotberg. Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service, 1969. p.1.

17. Baratz, S. S. and Baratz, J. C. "Early Childhood Intervention: The Social Science Base of Institutional Racism," Harvard Educational Review, 40 (February 1970), p.45.

18. U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, op. cit., p.106.

19. Ibid., p.82.

20. Miller, S. M. and Roby, P., "Educational Strategies and the Disadvantaged: An Overview" in Opening Opportunities for Disadvantaged Learners, edited by A. H. Passow. New York: Teachers College Press, 1972. pp.49-64.

21. Passow, A. H. "Urban Education in the 1970's," Interchange, 1, 4 (1970), pp.38-39.

22. Ibid., p.28.

23. National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children. Title I ESEA--A Review and a Forward Look. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1969. p.3.

24. Smith, M. S. and Bissell, J. S., "Report Analysis: The Impact of Head Start," Harvard Educational Review, 40 (Winter 1970), 51-52.

25. Office of Economic Opportunity, An Experiment in Performance Contracting: Summary of Preliminary Results. Washington, D. C.: Office of Economic Opportunity, February 1972. p.31.

26. National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children, op. cit., p.3.

27. See, for example; Eidenberg, E. and Morey, R. D.: An Act of Congress: the Legislative Process and the Making of Education Policy. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1969. Also, Bailey, S. K. and Mosher, E. K., ESEA: The Office of Education Administers a Law. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968.

28. "Retreat from Reason," The New York Times, March 26, 1972.

29. President's Task Force on Urban Education, op. cit., p.7.